



# **ACCOUNTABILITY REPORT**

2024-25

Advanced Education

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Accountability Report 2024–2025

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# Measuring Performance

The Department of Advanced Education's mission is to facilitate a proactive and inclusive post-secondary system where people learn, grow and thrive. Our strategic priorities that shaped initiatives and programs to support the Department's mission in 2024-25 are the following:

- Focusing on the Student Experience and Well-Being
- Responding to Critical Workforce Need
- Modernizing and Accelerating Post-Secondary Education Programming
- Fostering Sustainability and Accountability

The following highlights the initiatives and programs that were advanced in 2024-25.

## Focusing on the Student Experience and Well-Being

- Advanced Education partnered with the Department of Growth and Development to launch a new funding stream under the Affordable Housing Development Program to support the development of new student housing in the province.
- In September 2024, new student housing facilities opened at the NSCC Akerley campus in Dartmouth and NSCC Pictou campus in Stellarton, creating a total of 150 beds for students. Student housing at the NSCC Ivany campus in Dartmouth is on track to open in September 2025 with an additional 200 new student beds. Advanced Education continues to work with the Department of Public Works and NSCC on the planning and development of additional student housing projects at NSCC campuses in Bridgewater, Halifax, Kentville, and Springhill. Combined, these projects bring the total number of new NSCC student beds since 2021 to 620.
- The Province supported Nova Scotian students with the cost of post-secondary education by providing a one-time grant of \$315 to over 11,000 eligible students in the 2024-25 academic year.
- The Post-Secondary Advisory Council for African Nova Scotian and Black Students completed a draft framework for post-secondary recruitment and retention that supports racial equity and equal opportunities for African Nova Scotian and Black students. Government provides leadership through participation on the Council with membership from Advanced Education, the Office of Equity and Anti-Racism, African Nova Scotian Affairs, and Education and Early Childhood Development (EECD).
- The Mi'kmaq and Indigenous Post-Secondary Recruitment and Retention Working Group, co-led by Advanced Education and Mi'kmaq Kina'matnewey, initiated development of standardized questions for a self-identification process for student enrollment at universities and NSCC. The Working Group also led the development of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) Poster Campaign in support of the commemoration of the 10th anniversary of the TRC Canada: Calls to Action.

- Advanced Education led the development of amendments to regulations under the *Private Career Colleges Act* to require all private career colleges in the province to have a sexual violence prevention policy.
- The Province provided over \$1 million in funding in 2024-25 to support sexual violence prevention and mental health initiatives on campuses. This funding supported activities such as the HealthyMindsNS Campus Wellbeing Initiative which aims to improve mental health and wellbeing among students on campuses through the combined efforts of a dedicated Provincial Coordinator and Student Wellness Champions at each institution. The funding also secured Student Sexual Health and Safety Educators and a Provincial Sexual Violence Prevention Educator Coordinator through 2026–27, ensuring continued delivery of campus-based education, advocacy, and training, including the Waves of Change Bystander Intervention Program. This work supports Recommendation C.17 in the Mass Casualty Commission Report “Promoting Bystander Intervention as a Daily Practice”.

## Responding to Critical Workforce Need

- Advanced Education, in collaboration with the Department of Agriculture, led the development and implementation of a new Interprovincial Funding Agreement with the University of Prince Edward Island to increase Nova Scotia’s subsidized seats from 16 to 24 in the Doctor of Veterinary Medicine program. The Agreement includes a return of service provision which requires Nova Scotian graduates to return to the province to work for three years.
- Advanced Education led, in collaboration with key partners, initiatives to support the Province’s health education priorities. Some examples include:
  - Continued partnership with the Michener Institute to deliver Medical Laboratory Technology training to a cohort of 17 students.
  - Acadia University, in their new nursing program offered in collaboration with Cape Breton University, admitted 68 nursing students across various pathways: 42 through Direct Entry, 13 through Advanced Standing, and 13 through the Licensed Practical Nurse (LPN) to Registered Nurse stream.
  - Dalhousie University, Cape Breton University, Acadia University, and St. Francis Xavier University made improvements to their Bachelor of Science in Nursing (BScN) admissions and enrolment processes to ensure greater consistency in direct entry requirements, deposit amounts, offer timelines, and registration schedules.
  - The Province launched a new, accelerated six-month Continuing Care Assistant program, which began in April 2024, to help address the growing demand for skilled care providers across the province. This innovative training pathway, implemented by several private career colleges and NSCC, supports faster entry into the workforce while maintaining high standards of care and education.

## Modernizing and Accelerating Post-Secondary Education Programming

- In September 2024, the new NSCC Sydney Waterfront campus opened to replace the old Marconi campus and features state-of-the-art technology and increased capacity for student enrolment.
- In 2024-25, the Department of Advanced Education provided strategic leadership to support the development of accelerated Bachelor of Education (B.Ed.) programming at Acadia University and Mount Saint Vincent University. The Department provided funding to Cape Breton University to expand the number of seats in its B.Ed. programs from 40 to 115 for three years (2024-25, 2025-26, 2026-27).
- Advanced Education, in partnership with EECD, the Department of Labour, Skills and Immigration, and NSCC, piloted a new skilled trades program designed to provide high school students who qualified to graduate after the first semester of Grade 12 with the opportunity to begin post-secondary studies at NSCC in February 2025. Two pilot sites were established: the Truro campus, offering a Certificate in Electrical Construction and Industrial for up to 14 students; and the Sydney Waterfront campus, offering a Certificate in Plumbing to a maximum of 20 students.
- Advanced Education continued its partnership with Mitacs through funding to offer work-integrated learning opportunities for students. In 2024-25, the Province provided \$4.7 million to Mitacs to provide 947 internship units, which benefited 487 students in Nova Scotia.
- The Department developed and implemented new requirements into the 2025-27 bilateral agreements with universities to require tracking and reporting work-integrated and experiential learning to allow for better tracking and monitoring of opportunities available to students.

## Fostering Sustainability and Accountability

- Advanced Education implemented one-year Bilateral Agreements with each of Nova Scotia's ten publicly funded universities in 2024-25 which included a 2% cap on tuition increases for Nova Scotian undergraduate students. In addition, each university was required to develop and submit a Strategic Alignment plan illustrating how the university will maximize its contribution to the social and economic needs of the province, to students, and to Nova Scotia's workforce. The 2025-27 agreement builds upon the 2024-25 agreements, and includes a tuition freeze for Nova Scotian undergraduates for the two years and carries forward performance-based funding measures for universities.
- Advanced Education led a collaborative strategic alignment planning process with the universities and NSCC to improve sector alignment with the priorities and needs of the province. The universities submitted their strategic alignment plans to government and key actions from the plans were incorporated into the 2025-27 university bilateral agreements. NSCC was issued a strategic mandate letter and submitted the required reports for its strategic alignment planning.

- The Province implemented performance-based funding for universities in 2024-25, tied to the areas of student housing and health education programs. The universities were also required to develop plans around international student recruitment and support and consider ways to achieve administrative savings.

# Appendix A- Accountability Statement

The Accountability Report of the Department of Advanced Education for the year ended March 31, 2025, is prepared pursuant to the *Finance Act* and government policies and guidelines. The reporting of the Department of Advanced Education outcomes necessarily includes estimates, judgments, and opinions by Department management.

We acknowledge that this Accountability Report is the responsibility of the Department management. The report is, to the extent possible, a complete and accurate representation of outcomes relative to the goals and priorities set out in the Department of Advanced Education 2024-25 Business Plan.

Original signed by:

Original signed by:

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Honourable Brendan Maguire  
Minister

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Tracey Barbrick  
Deputy Minister

## Appendix B -Financial Summary and Variance Explanation

<b>Departmental Expenses Summary</b> (\$ thousands)			
<b>Programs and Services</b>	<b>2024-2025 Estimate</b>	<b>2024-2025 Actuals</b>	<b>2024-2025 Variance</b>
Administration	647	653	6
Strategy, Policy & Partnership	2,201	2,525	324
Program and Service Delivery	69,608	69,375	(233)
Nova Scotia Community College	184,409	184,214	(195)
Grants to Universities	468,674	482,299	13,625
<b>Total - Departmental Expenses</b>	<b>725,539</b>	<b>739,066</b>	<b>13,527</b>
<b>Additional Information:</b>			
Ordinary Revenues	(9,500)	(10,326)	(826)
Fees and Other Charges	(40)	(46)	(6)
Ordinary Recoveries	(10,669)	(13,651)	(2,982)
<b>Total: Revenue, Fees and Recoveries</b>	<b>(20,209)</b>	<b>(24,023)</b>	<b>(3,814)</b>
TCA Purchase Requirements	48,778	50,205	1,427
<b>Funded Staff (# of FTEs)</b>			
<b>Department Funded Staff</b>	<b>74</b>	<b>64.8</b>	<b>(9.2)</b>
<b>Departmental Expenses Variance Explanation:</b>			
<p>Department of Advanced Education expenses were \$13.5 million or 1.9 percent higher than estimate primarily due to \$3.7 million to Mount Saint Vincent University for its Doctor of Psychology Program, \$3.0 million for the Mabou Housing Project, \$2.3 million for the Tartan Downs housing project, \$1.3 million to the Atlantic Veterinary College for a new funding agreement, \$1.3 million in expenses related to recovery fees for the NS Student Loan Program, \$950 thousand in NS student bursaries due to higher utilization, \$525 thousand for PREP Academy, and \$500 thousand for the Aboriginal Academic Access Post Secondary Program.</p>			
<b>Revenue, Fees and Recoveries Variance Explanation:</b>			
<p>Department of Advanced Education revenues, fees and recoveries were \$3.8 million or 18.9 percent higher than estimate primarily due to \$2.1 million for higher than anticipated interest revenue and recoveries in the NS Student Loan Program and \$1.6 million for the new regional transfer agreement with Prince Edward Island.</p>			
<b>TCA Purchase Requirements Variance Explanation:</b>			
<p>Department of Advanced Education TCA purchase requirements were \$1.4 million or 2.9 percent higher than estimate primarily due to construction phases shifting between fiscal years for NSCC Sydney Waterfront Campus and the NSCC Campus Student Housing projects.</p>			
<b>Provincial Funded Staff (FTEs) Variance Explanation:</b>			
<p>Department of Advanced Education FTEs were 9.2 lower than estimated, primarily due to the natural vacancy experience realized throughout the year.</p>			

## Appendix C -Public Interest Disclosure of Wrongdoing Act

The *Public Interest Disclosure of Wrongdoing Act* was proclaimed into law on December 20, 2011. The Act provides for government employees to be able to come forward if they reasonably believe that a wrongdoing has been committed or is about to be committed and they are acting in good faith. The Act also protects employees who do disclose from reprisals, by enabling them to lay a complaint of reprisal with the Labor Board.

A wrongdoing for the purposes of the Act is:

- a) a contravention of provincial or federal laws or regulations;
- b) a misuse or gross mismanagement of public funds or assets;
- c) an act or omission that creates an imminent risk of a substantial and specific danger to the life, health or safety of persons or the environment; or,
- d) directing or counselling someone to commit a wrongdoing.

The following is a summary of disclosures received by the Department of Advanced Education:

Information Required under Section 18 of the Act	Fiscal Year 2024-2025
The number of disclosures received	0
The number of findings of wrongdoing	0
Details of each wrongdoing	n/a
Recommendations and actions taken on each wrongdoing.	n/a